by 21 per cent Oil imports during this period amounted to US $ 20.8 billion and non-oil imports amounted to US $ 42.7 billion. The total value of exports was greater than the value of non-oil imports. The higher rate of growth of imports was largely on account of spurt in oil prices in the international market and growing demand for capital goods and inputs for the manufacturing sector.

Declaration of MES as inter service organisation

*108. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Military Engineering Service has been treated as an Inter Service Organisation by including the same as such in the Annual Report of Ministry of Defence;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for not declaring the service as an ISO formally and keeping it under the Engineer-in-Chief;

(c) whether Government are considering and proposal in this regard;

(d) if so, what is its status and likely time by when it will be finalised; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHEJEE). (a) to (e) The Military Engineering Services has been mentioned as one of the Inter Service Organisations in the Annual Report of the Ministry of Defence, 2004-05 as it provides works support to all the three services. The Engineer-in-Chief of the Army is the head of Corps, of Engineers and Military Engineering services as per the notification of the Ministry of Defence. Military Engineering Services has been raised to fulfill the operational requirements of the armed forces and to support their combat effectiveness. Most of the works executed by Military Engineering Services are defence oriented. Hence, continuation of the present system is justified.

Export of vegetable oils

*109. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that export of vegetable oils has been made free and export restrictions on groundnut oil has been removed;

(b) if so, the quantities of different vegetable oils exported during 2004-05; and